

July 6, 2007

Gift of the Week **In the Artistic Ring**

By **ROBERT J. HUGHES**
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WHO GAVE IT: Ulla Searing, widow of insurance executive Arthur F. Searing

HOW MUCH: \$2.5 million

WHO GOT IT: The John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Fla.

BY REQUEST: The funds endow the museum's curator of collections.

HOW IT HAPPENED: Mrs. Searing, 94 years old, grew up in Sweden, and says she and her late husband, who worked for American International Group and died in 1983, had "longstanding interests" in the art world. A member of the Ringling circus family founded the museum, which opened in 1930 and specializes in Old Masters, concentrating on artists from the Baroque era, including Rubens, Titian and Franz Hals.



Ulla Searing

Stephen R. Borys, curator of collections, says that after he took the post in March 2006, the museum's director gave him the challenge of getting his position endowed. He worked closely with Mrs. Searing, who divides her time between Sarasota and Southampton, N.Y. Mrs. Searing had made an earlier gift of \$6.5 million, which led to the opening of the Ulla R. and Arthur F. Searing Wing in February, to be used for temporary collections.

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